

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 000554

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [BG](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: PM ZIA PROMISES FULL SUPPORT FOR "FBI" ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 20642

Classified By: Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (C) Summary. PM Zia promised full support for U.S. law enforcement consultants investigating the January 27 attack, expressed a strong preference for the FBI because of its positive profile in Bangladesh, and attributed hartal violence and a bombing at the Khulna press club to the Awami League. As the next step, we request New Delhi Legatt come to Dhaka to negotiate appropriate terms of reference. End Summary.

12. (U) Action request--see para 8.

13. (SBU) On February 7, Ambassador presented reftel talking points to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. P/E counselor (notetaker), PMO Principal Secretary Kamaluddin Siddiqui, PMO Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury, and PMO Press Secretary Tajul Islam sat in.

14. (C) After opening pleasantries, Ambassador stated that he had come in response to the PM's telephone conversation with Secretary Rice and her request for U.S. law enforcement

SIPDIS

assistance in investigating the January 27 attack. He reiterated USG condemnation of the attack and the importance of solving the crime. We want, he said, to work with the BDG to support democracy and stability, and to stop acts that benefit only the extremists.

15. (C) However, he noted, we have serious concerns given our experience after the August 21 attack, when the BDG denied ATF consultants access to key witnesses and failed to protect the crime scene from severe contamination. To make the involvement of U.S. law enforcement consultants meaningful this time, we seek clear BDG commitments that U.S. consultants would have full access to all evidence and witnesses. If the consultants came and were obstructed, Ambassador said, they would leave and the USG would be obliged to explain publicly why. As a next step, he suggested that terms of reference be negotiated with the Home Ministry to detail the precise role and parameters of USG consultants in the investigation.

16. (C) Zia asserted her full support for an open and complete investigation to solve this "very sad" crime. She expressed a strong preference for FBI involvement because, as Principal Secretary Siddiqui interjected, "The FBI is well known and

SIPDIS

well respected here." Press Secretary Islam suggested that, even if ATF agents were included, the team could still be called a "FBI" team. The Ambassador undertook to convey to Washington the PM's strong preference for the FBI.

17. (C) Ambassador noted that with each passing day the January 27 crime scene, if not properly protected, would become more and more contaminated. Siddiqui took the point, but remarked that fencing off the crime scene would lead to "opposition" allegations that the BDG has "something to hide." Zia added: "We're very concerned by these attacks, but are hartals and bomb throwings that kill policemen good for democracy?" As Zia nodded, Siddiqui attributed to the Awami League the February 5 bombing at the Khulna press club that injured four persons, one seriously.

18. (C) Action requested: Please authorize/instruct New Delhi Legatt to come to Dhaka to negotiate with Home Ministry officials appropriate terms of reference for U.S. law enforcement consultants in the January 27 attack investigation, with special emphasis on what the BDG wants them to do and what the BDG would do to make their involvement meaningful.

19. (C) Comment: There is intense, BDG-fueled media coverage of possible USG involvement in the January 27 case. As the PMO press secretary left to brief the media, he asked if he could announce that a FBI team is en route. Ambassador and the PM agreed to say the issue had been discussed and that the next step would be to work out terms of reference. The BDG has a lot riding on "FBI" participation, which it is already projecting as evidence of its commitment to solve Kibria's killing. The profile of USG involvement would be further elevated if British High Commissioner Chowdhury is

right in anticipating that Scotland Yard will not get involved this time because of its negative experience with the investigations of the August 21 attack and the May 21 attack on Chowdhury himself.

THOMAS